

134 EMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER

As it happened, the serial issue, if suspended in "La Cloche," was completed in a periodical called "La Rdpubligiie des Lettres" which Catulle Mendes, the poet and son-in-law of Theophile Gautier, was then editing. Mendes placed himself at Zola's disposal directly he heard of the affair, and curiously enough he rendered him a similar service some years later with respect to "L'Assommoir." The first edition of "La Cure" was produced by Lacroix early in 1872,¹ and soon afterwards the publisher, whose interests had been greatly affected by the war, was forced to suspend business. Thus once more the demon of ill-luck fell upon Zola's home. The "Lettres parisiennes" which he was then writing for "La Cloche," his correspondence for "Le Semaphore," did not supply all his needs; terrible times came back, numerous bills given to Lacroix were protested, executions followed, and on one desperate occasion, there being nothing pawnable, for everything had been seized except the bedding, which according to the law could not be attached, the very wool of the mattresses on which Zola and his wife slept was sold by the latter to a dealer in order to procure the necessary money for bread.

In these distressful circumstances a great service was rendered to Zola by a man for whose literary

style he had
no great admiration, though curiously
enough it was in
more than one respect akin to his own. This
was Theophile Gautier to whose connection with Oatulle
Mendes reference has just been made. Gautier had a
fair knowledge of the young man's literary work, and
he heard, pro-

¹ "La Curee," Librairie Internationale; 1st edition: covers dated 1872, title-pages, 1871, 360 pages, 18mo, 3 francs; 2d edition, Charpentier, 1872, 354 pages, 18mo, 3 francs 50 centimes; 5th. edition, 350 pages, 1876; fiftieth thousand on sale in 1903,